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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the winter quarter internship program that is part of the Urban Educational Leadership (UEL) Program of the University of Cincinnati. The internship program is designed to help students gain knowledge and understanding of urban education leadership and issues in the lives of urban youth. It aims to provide students with a quality learning experience that engages them in preparation for urban educational leadership through practice. UEL students are required to work outside of their schools and choose a project or experience that will cause them to work at several central office jobs or at a school. The focus is on urban districts in Ohio and Kentucky. Students plan and coordinate a project in an urban environment, lead it in an atmosphere of collaboration, participate in seminar sessions throughout the project, and maintain a reflective journal of their experiences. When possible students participate in grant writing to gain financial support for their projects. UEL interns work with mentors in their internship, which occurs during 6 months of the second year of study. The student is expected to prepare written products related to the internship experience and collect them in a portfolio, which is evaluated along with class participation and adherence to course requirements. (SLD)

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Internship Experience as Part of the Urban Leadership Program

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University of Cincinnati
Urban Educational Leadership Program

Internship I - Winter Quarter

18 - UEL - 931

Dr. Lionel H. Brown

Introduction

The professional development of students in the Urban Educational Leadership (UEL) program is a continuous process facilitated by the urban experience.

The internship experience is a part of the Urban Educational Leadership program that is offered through collaborative efforts between the university and field sites. Through the internship experience, students developing in their areas of expertise will have the opportunity to learn-in-doing.
The primary goals of the internship experience are:

- to enable students to gain knowledge and understanding of urban education leadership and issues in the lives of urban youth;
- to provide students with a quality learning experience that engages them in preparation through practice to become urban educational leaders.

The internship will provide significant opportunities in the urban workplace for students to synthesize and apply knowledge and to practice and develop the skills related to all of the UEL program goal areas. When coupled with integrating experiences through the second year Action Research Seminar sequence, the outcome should be a powerful synthesis of knowledge, performance, and dispositions useful to practicing urban educational leaders. The internship includes a variety of substantial experiences in diverse settings planned and guided cooperatively by the student's mentor from partner urban schools and community agencies, and the student's major advisor in the UEL program.

Students seeking advanced educational administrator licensure in an area of practice must take the required courses for the licensure sought because the internship may not meet what is required for the licensure sought.
The student's UEL program advisor, the UEL field placement coordinator,

and the Educational Administration Coordinator will work cooperatively to plan and approve internship experience and course work which meets the requirements for the advanced administrative licensure.

Objectives

The Urban Educational Leadership (UEL) program requires students to participate in an urban experience. There are two internship courses required in the UEL doctoral program. This syllabus describes the goals and requirements for the first of these internship courses.

UEL students, who plan to be leaders in urban schools, are to work outside of their schools and identify a project and experience that will cause them to work at several central office jobs or at a school. The experiences will lead students to gain a whole view of a central office and how the various roles and functions at central office relate with the district's schools and community. The focus of the internship will be on urban districts such as Cincinnati, Middletown, Hamilton and other urban districts in Ohio and Kentucky, and on educational issues and problems in the urban community. The project is to be structured to allow for learning experiences in the broader community and should include the parent community of the school district. UEL students, who plan to be leaders in urban community agencies, are to work with a focus on an urban school district or address a problem or issue in urban education.
The UEL student will then be more familiar with urban educational environments, both schools and communities.

In the first course:

- Students will write a description of the field site in order to gain an understanding of the whole environment.
- Students will exercise leadership in an urban environment through organizing and planning a project idea which is submitted to the field mentor and UEL field coordinator for approval. Interns identify an urban education problem, devise solutions jointly with school or agency staff and members of the community, provide sustained leadership over six months of addressing the problem, and evaluate outcomes.
- Students will lead the project in an environment of collaboration.
- Students will participate in a community of scholars through seminar sessions.
- Students will maintain a reflective journal of experiences.

Where-in possible, students will participate in grant writing to obtain financial support for the project.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The UEL program will identify mentors who are able to provide the best possible mentoring relationships for students. Ideally, mentors should exemplify the best in urban educational leadership practice, and be willing to take time to explain leadership strategies, develop planned experiences, and provide encouragement and feedback to students.

The following collaborative activities between partner urban district schools and community agencies, and the university will be implemented to ensure a quality internship experience:

1. encourage interns to express preferences where they wish to intern;
2. establish criteria for approving mentor and site before the final placement of interns;
3. provide mentor training, mentor handbooks, and individual mentor support;
4. provide sustained and systematic communication.

Mentors will be expected to:

1. participate in annual training sessions regarding their roles and responsibilities;
2. present in seminars at the invitation of UEL students and/or faculty;
3. supervise intern activities;
4. meet with UEL intern and faculty member to approve the intern's planned activities at the beginning of the experience, to coach the intern during the experience, and to evaluate the intern's experience at the end of the six months;
5. participate in UEL program evaluations.

Requirements

During the second year of study, students will engage in a six-month mentored internship that will amount to approximately fifty days of experience as an urban educational leader; twenty five days in the winter quarter and twenty five days in the spring quarter. Each student will complete the following two internship courses during the winter and spring terms of the second year:

1. Internship Project

Each student will keep a log that speaks to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a project intended to benefit an urban organization and advance the professional growth of the student. A record of hours will be kept on a log of hours form that indicates the time spent and the specific

activity. It is the responsibility of the field placement coordinator to secure an urban site and the cooperation of the practicing urban educational leader for all activities.
If the student is working toward administrator licensure, the field mentor must hold the license that is being sought by the student.

a. In the assessment stage, the student assesses the local needs and his/her individual professional development needs in order to set direction for the internship. The assessment results and related goals are in the contract for the internship experience.

b. In the planning stage, the student plans a set of activities aimed at accomplishing the identified professional development and urban goals. The plan is articulated in an explicitly written contract. The contract contains:

- a description of the project, including a description of the site;
- detailed statements of the goals and objectives of the project;
- a description of the implementation steps including activities, needed resources, timeline;
- a description of the criteria and procedures of evaluation of the project.

The internship experience contract must be reviewed and agreed upon by the practicing administrator and the university professor before the student initiates implementing the plan.

c. In the implementation stage, the student begins engaging in the activities associated with the internship. With the initiation of action, the student begins reflection through discussion with the practicing administrator, the university professor, other students in the internship experience seminar sessions and through journaling.

d. In the evaluation stage, the student assesses how and the degree to which the internship goals for the urban district or agency and his/her professional development have been met. The evaluation is conducted according to the plan in the internship experience contract developed in the planning stage. The results of the evaluation are reviewed, discussed, and agreed on by the student, the practicing administrator, community agency, and the university professor.

The student will present a written report of the internship experience project, including sections on the assessment stage, the planning stage, and the evaluation stage.

2. Reflective Journal

Each student will keep a reflective journal for the internship experience. It is best to attend to the journal on a daily basis, becoming accustomed to observing, acting, and thinking in depth about the internship experience. Journal entries should report all pertinent information regarding an experience (e.g. place, date, situation, participants, actions, etc.) and reflections on the experience. The journal will be treated as a confidential document.

3. Seminars

While the student is engaged in the internship experience, meaningful reflection-on-practice can occur in discussions with other students who are engaged in internship experiences in other sites. Seminar discussions, which are problem solving in nature, help the student reflect on the uniqueness of the situation in which he/she is working, discover commonalties across internship sites, and give and receive professional help among developing urban leaders, and connect the knowledge developed in previous courses with knowledge developed in practice. Students are expected to demonstrate ethics of justice, care, respect, critique, reciprocity, confidentiality, and honesty.

Evaluation

The quality of products submitted by the student, class participation, and adherence to course requirements will be evaluated. It is important to attend to details and produce quality work. The student is expected to place written products in his/her portfolio, collection of work.

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